



FIA Matters!

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Produced by FIA Office of Communications, Suite 1510, Grand Tower, Lansing
Submit stories by e-mail to FIA-Newsletter@michigan.gov

Today's big story

UAW, Wayne CFS and FIA kids share a night of Tiger baseball

From Gwendolyn M. Scroggins
Wayne County CFS Central District, Detroit
ScrogginsG@michigan.gov

The UAW partnered with Wayne County FIA Children and Family Service districts Aug. 7 to take youthful customers and their chaperones to a Tigers baseball game at Comerica Park in Detroit. The UAW provided admission to the ballpark, transportation to and from the ballpark, the standard ballpark food, and a tote bag of goodies.

The UAW paid for 73 FIA youngsters and their chaperones to attend the game. The young customers ranged in age from 5 years to 17 years of age. They were selected from the four Children and Family Services Districts in Wayne County.

Children were selected to participate by service specialists in each district, who reviewed their families and presented a final total of children and chaperones. For the majority of the kids, Aug. 7 was the first time they had been to a baseball game.

Did the kids have a great time? The answer is a resounding, "Yes!" Someone told me that when they returned home they stayed up two or more hours telling their cohorts all about the game and the ball park. Most enjoyed themselves so much that they wanted to return the next night.

Three of the youngsters I spoke with afterward could not contain their excitement about what they had seen, what they did and what happened on the ball field. Each took about an hour to tell me their individual story.

Many thanks go to FIA specialists **Ava Thomas** and **ChristyAnn Smith** from Central Operations CFS District and **Florence Perry** and **Denise Groggins** from South Central CFS District who participated as chaperones for some of the young customers to ensure that they got to see the game. Ava chaperoned a sibling group of six from the caseload of a fellow service specialist. Also, ChristyAnn assisted UAW Local 6000 representative **Ruth Mutchler** with counting those getting on the bus and made sure no one got left behind.

Thanks to all of the specialists in the four CFS Districts with all that they did in adding and subtracting of families to be included. Thanks also to **Ron Hughes** and his staff for putting it together. A job well done by all involved.

Even though Boston Red Sox defeated the Tigers that Saturday night by a 7-4 score, there was just one question from the guests: "Can we do it again next year?"



FIA staffer ChristyAnn Smith and UAW representative Ruth Mutchler (left-right above) made sure everybody got on the bus for the trip to Comerica Park (inset photo).

Click to read...

Local office news..... 2-3

New prescription coverage.....2-3

Your letters4

Newaygo FIA raises \$600 for child abuse & neglect prevention

By Jim McCormick, Director
Newaygo and Lake County FIA
McCormickJ@michigan.gov

The staff at the Newaygo County FIA are truly making a difference in the lives of children this year. They raised \$600 with a staff breakfast, luncheon and a chunk of their ongoing "Casual for a Cause" money in a community effort to help prevent child abuse and neglect.

It all began when eligibility specialist **Kim Polasek** asked managerial staff and me if we could somehow get more involved in the "B93 Roofsit For Kids" this year. "It would be nice if we as an agency could come together in a time of need for these children," she said.

The B93 Roofsit For Kids is an annual radio-thon to raise public awareness and funding for child abuse and neglect prevention and counseling programs in west Michigan. The DJs actually sit on the roof in this promotion! Rather than putting their change in the little containers that look like houses throughout the community, our staff decided to participate in the "Roofsit" on a grander scale this year.

People came up with lots of ideas to raise money. We decided a breakfast and luncheon would be the best fundraisers as well as something they all like to do - eat! Then eligibility specialist **Cheryl Babcock** had the idea to use some of their "Casual for a Cause" money as well. This fund is from office casual days and is used to specifically aid clients, local charities and improve working conditions for staff.

These three activities raised \$600 in the local office and actually raised \$1,200 for the kids in need in Newaygo County. All funds raised from the "B93 Roofsit For Kids" are being matched by the local Fremont Area Community Foundation, doubling all monies contributed. All these donations go to the county's Prevention Council for Child Abuse and Neglect. Newaygo County staff should be very proud of this accomplishment and their ongoing commitment to the people we serve.

[Click here](#) to view some photos of the event.



B-93 Morning Personality Reese Rickards accepts the \$600 donation from organizer Kim Polasek and other Newaygo County staff who participated in the B-93 Cares for Kids campaign.

Mecosta-Osceola FIA summer employee recognition event

From Diana Witbeck
Mecosta County FIA, Big Rapids
WitbeckD@michigan.gov

To show their appreciation to staff for all their team efforts in providing dedicated service to the customers and communities, the Management Team honored staff with a "Picnic in Paris" (Michigan!) on Aug. 24. The Mecosta and Osceola FIA Boards provided the main course while **Clay Covey**, husband of Mecosta County Board member **Janice Covey**, did the grilling. The Management Team from both offices supplied the rest of the food and the fun.

Winners of the bean bag horseshoe toss and bubble gum blowing contests were given prizes provided by the Mecosta County Board. Awards and certificates of appreciation were given to staff by their supervisors and the director. Good fellowship and fun was had by all!

New MiRx program



Michigan residents without prescription drug coverage may qualify for the new **MiRx Card**. With the new prescription drug discount card, uninsured and under insured Michigan residents will be able to get their prescription medication for less money at participating pharmacies. Beneficiaries will save as much as 20 percent off the retail prices they would normally pay as a cash customer. There is no cost to enroll in the program and the MiRx Card is easy to use. To be eligible, applicants must be a resident of the Michigan, have no other prescription drug coverage, and have an income

level at or below the state's median income level. A family of four can qualify with an income at or below \$56,550. Single people can qualify with income of \$27,930 or less. Applicants can call **1-866-755-6479** and have an application mailed to their home or download the application from the Department of Community Health Web site – www.michigan.gov/mdch

Back to school “pack a backpack” program

From Mike Peach, Community Resource Coordinator
Alcona-Iosco County FIA
PeachM@michigan.gov

It's not easy for a child to have to go back to school after having the whole summer off. It is even more difficult if that child does not have the necessary school supplies and backpack.

The Alcona-Iosco County Family Independence Agency spearheaded a new program called the “Back-to-School-Pack-a-Backpack Program”. This program provided backpacks and school supplies to low-income youths.

The Strong Families Safe Children Collaborative Workgroup determined backpacks and school supplies were needed for local children. The collaborative didn't want children to have to return to school without a backpack filled with required school supplies.

A wide variety of backpacks for girls and boys grades K-12 were filled with items from a list provided by area schools. FIA and community partners distributed about 120 backpacks before school started. The first backpacks were given to a single mother and her three children. She visited the Iosco County FIA lobby in East Tawas at lunchtime. Her youngest daughter, a petite and shy 14-year-old, smiled and was surprised the backpack was filled with writing tablets, ruler, folders, markers, erasers, crayons, tissues and even a breakfast bar. The family was extremely thankful for receiving this gift.

After receiving a backpack a mother and child returned to their vehicle in the parking lot. They placed the filled backpack between them. Office manager [Holly Hussain](#) observed the mother and child inspecting the contents of the backpack. She reported they were smiling and elated.



With backpacks (l-r) Karin Hobbs, Alcona-Iosco FIA County director; Mike Peach, Christine Kendra, work study student, Lisa Bolen, Michigan Works! program coordinator, volunteer Carol Harless.



Oceana County Migrant Program specialist [Jose Barco](#) donated his ponytail to Locks of Love, the nonprofit agency that makes wigs for cancer patients who have lost their hair. Individuals and agencies got into a “bidding war” for the privilege of cutting off Jose's ponytail. Oceana FIA workers pooled their bids, which Jose matched, for a generous total of \$250 donated to Relay For Life. CPS worker [Kendra Masunas](#), wearing her tiara after being named Oceana County's “Mrs. Asparagus” earlier this year, removed Jose's ponytail July 30. – From [Jane Hedberg](#)

“The child held up each item and exclaimed, ‘Oh, I needed this,’ and ‘This is so nice,’” she said.

Partners in this project include Michigan State University Extension Center, AuSable Valley Community Mental Health, Michigan Works!, Family Court, Friend of the Court, Tawas City Building Department, District Health Department No. 2 and the FIA. All were involved in filling backpacks with school supplies.

“I hope Alcona-Iosco Family Independence Agency and our community partners will be able to offer backpacks in the future,” said [Karin Hobbs](#), Alcona-Iosco FIA director. She thanked all the community agencies and volunteers who helped make this project successful.

Pfizer Pfriends

Prescription drug manufacturer Pfizer Inc. launched a new program for families without prescription drug coverage called [Pfizer Pfriends](#).

Qualifications criteria includes:

- Families earning less than \$31,000 qualify for free Pfizer medicines through existing Pfizer programs.
- Through Pfizer Pfriends, families earning less than \$45,000 a year will see prescription drug savings up to 50 percent and averaging about 37 percent off retail prices on Pfizer medicines.
- Through Pfizer Pfriends, families earning more than \$45,000 will be eligible for savings up to 25 percent, and averaging 15 percent, off retail prices on Pfizer prescription medications.

Pfizer manufactures a number of well-known prescription drugs including Celebrex, Nicotrol, Lipitor and Zyrtec. For more information visit www.pfizer.com or call toll-free 1-866-776-3700.

Date: Aug. 27
To: Robert Welliver, Assistant Attorney General
Michigan Department of Attorney General
Subj: Garry Goddard

Enclosed please find a true copy of the signed order of dismissal of our petition in (a) case in Lapeer County Circuit Court. There was a delay in this matter because the hospital continued to bill our client for services rendered in February 2004. The hospital's records showed (the client) as not covered under Medicaid for that period. This was only resolved when Gary Goddard from the FIA Bureau of Legal Affairs and Financial Integrity contacted the Lapeer County FIA office and ascertained that the caseworker had in fact notified Michigan Department of Community Health that (the client) was entitled to coverage. I mention this because I want to take special notice of Mr. Goddard's helpfulness in this matter. He was able to discover the root of the problem within a few hours when previously the case had dragged on for several weeks. Thank you for your courtesy in this matter.

Alan Tucker

Legal Services of Eastern Michigan, Flint

■ Musette Michael, director of FIA Office of Legal Affairs and Financial Integrity in Lansing, submitted this letter for publication.

Date: Aug. 16
To: Don Rewa, Director
Barry-Eaton FIA
Subj: Laverne Duncan

I have been receiving assistance on and off for approximately five years now. I have had my share of caseworkers in the process, some okay and some not too okay. I would like to say that Laverne Duncan has been a tremendous help in my life since I have been assigned to her. I would like to extend my gratitude to her by informing you. She is an excellent caseworker; she puts the word "social" in social worker. Each time I come for review she's concerned with my progress. She likes to know what's going on, she offers her opinion, and most of all she is understanding. She is great. I would like to thank you for having such a wonderful person on your time. Thank you, Ms. Duncan.

Reteasher D. Lewis

Lansing

■ Laverne Duncan is a family independence specialist with Eaton County FIA in Charlotte.

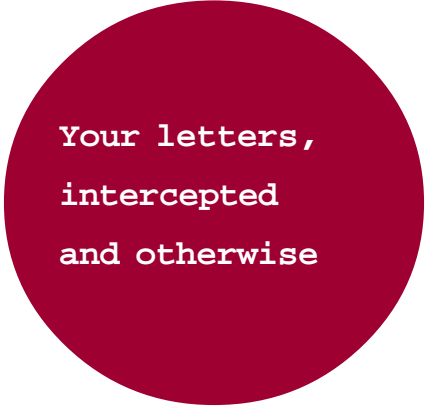
Date: June 15
To: Jane Johnson, Director
Muskegon County FIA, Muskegon
Subj: Brenda Plitchka

I am in receipt of your services and I am very thankful but that is not the reason for this note. When I first signed up I had been shuffled around a little between social workers. I understand because of the services you offer. This note is about one such social worker, Brenda Plitchka. I won the lucky draw when she became my social worker. She is a very special, compassionate, wonderful woman and I think everyone can take a lesson from her. She's honest when she says she will call back and above all she has a heart, integrity and dignity. Thank you for Mrs. Plitchka as well as the services you have helped me with.

Elizabeth A. Lynch

Whitehall

■ Brenda Plitchka is an eligibility specialist with Muskegon County FIA.



Your letters,
intercepted
and otherwise

Submitting client letters for publication

Letters praising employees are very popular with other employees. To submit a customer letter for publication:

- Ensure your supervisor knows about this and approves.
- Have the customer sign a **Consent for Publication** form downloadable from the MS Word template as form **0199**.
- Send the letter and a copy of the consent form by fax to (517) 373-8471. Keep the original consent form in the client file.
- Include the letter writer's hometown and the job classification(s) of the employee(s) cited in the letter.

FIA Matters! is a product of Michigan's Family Independence Agency
Marianne Udow, Director Karen Smith, Director, Office of Communications
Larry VanDeSande, editor Submit stories by e-mail to: **FIA-Newsletter@michigan.gov**